

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First-come, first-served

Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area to Open

The popular Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area, which closed after suffering serious damage in last October's wildfires that struck Southern California and December's floods, will reopen for the Memorial Day holiday weekend at noon Friday on a first-come, first-served basis, State Park officials announced today.

After the upcoming long holiday weekend, the park will be on the state's reservation system. Reservations may be made by telephoning ReserveAmerica at 1-800 444-PARK.

The following reservation schedule will be followed:

	<u>Reservation Start Date</u>	<u>Arrival Date</u>
Boating	May 28, 2004	June 3, 2004
Family Camping	June 9, 2004	June 11, 2004

All group camps will remain closed until further notice. The park will be open to aquatic recreation such as boating and swimming in designated swim areas. In addition:

- Rio Group Camp was burned and will remain closed;
- Miller Group Camps have no water and will remain closed;
- Miller Canyon bike paths were subjected to floods and fallen trees and will remain closed until further notice.
- The campground and main portions of the park will open; areas of the Pacific Trail were washed out and detours are available for Pacific Trail hikers.
- Cleghorn Canyon Day use areas will be restricted due to continuing debris removal. The hand launch ramp for kayaks and car-top boats will not be permitted. The main launch ramp, however, is available.

Inland Empire District Superintendent Gary Watts said the park is reopening as the result of the “strong commitment and combined efforts” of State Park personnel at Silverwood Lake and the Inland Empire District, the state Department of Boating and Waterways and the Department of Water Resources, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and State Park personnel from many outlying parks in the State Park System as well as thousands of hours of volunteers.

“The damage still is being worked on and will continue for at least one year,” Watts said. “Some facilities in the park remain to be rebuilt and some areas of the park will remain closed for safety concerns. We appreciate the patience of our frequent visitors and supporters.”

Silverwood Park Superintendent, Larry Cermak said the fire that struck much of the San Bernardino Mountain area burned into Silverwood Lake and destroyed restrooms, roofs, picnic tables, shade structures, roadway bicycle trails and utility safety fencing. In addition, he said, shade trees, large stands of chaparral, stream beds, hillsides and natural areas were severely burned. Several park offices, storage areas, tools, supplies, signs, stored buoys and equipment were lost. The historical Girl Scout Camp buildings in Burnt Mill Canyon were completely destroyed and burned to their foundations.

Cermak said that following the fire which destroyed vegetation that held soil in place, December’s floods inundated the burned canyons in the upper reaches of the park and caused mud flows that covered roadways, trails, bicycle paths, and entire picnic areas with up to six feet of mud.

For several months the park staff has been digging away at the roadways to provide access to other areas that needed restoration. In the last few months, there has been a tremendous amount of work done to repair facilities, and replace lost equipment and supplies. Electrical service was re-established to the park entrance and campground areas two weeks ago.

The shoreline has changed significantly as a result of the fire and floods of winter. Boaters should be cautious when approaching shores for shallow banks over the entire lake shore but especially in the Cleghorn and Miller Canyon areas that were not present last year.

Swimmers should be aware of sudden drop offs and miscellaneous unsafe obstacles may still be undiscovered under water. Such conditions naturally occur. The mountain areas above the desert are subjected to high winds in the afternoons and other times. Boat and swim safely this summer – water-proof your loved ones.

The annual State Park day-use pass, which is good for 12 months from the date purchased, is currently \$115 each. The pass will cost \$120 each beginning June 1, and \$125 beginning July 1. The annual pass provides access to more than 230 state parks.

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